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Transcript of News Conference By President on Money for the MX

Following is a transcript of President Reagan's news conference today, as recorded by The New York Times:

Salvadoran Election

Q. Mr. President, to switch the subject for a moment, Senator Helms has said that the United States bought the election in El Salvador. Could you tell us, please, exactly what was the financial involvement of the C.I.A. and other Government agencies?

A. I don't think that there was any attempt by any agency of the United States Government to participate in a partisan fashion in that election.

There has been overtly, not covertly, aid given to labor unions, to trade associations within the very framework of the program that I announced before the British Parliament a couple of years ago. And that is the idea of trying to help democracy by strengthening those organizations within a country that lead toward democracy, such as free labor unions and so forth. And we have helped finance those.

Now, it's possible that some of those groups then, just as our own do, decide to take a partisan stand in support of someone in an election. But that had nothing to do with the helping to fund those organizations, nor do we intervene with what they may want to do.

Q. Have you talked to Senator Helms about his remarks?

A. No, I had no conversation with him.

Money for the Parties

Q. Mr. President, you're saying that the reports or allegations that the C.I.A. covertly gave money to some of the parties that are involved is untrue?

A. What I'm saying is that I'm not going to discuss intelligence matters of that kind or what an agency like the C.I.A. may do, but I'm here to tell you that I am assured that we have not tried to participate as a Government in any way in the elections in El Salvador.

And I'd like to call to your attention that the group that just went down there to observe this election — and we've done this every election. But this last group, completely bipartisan and with some people who admittedly went down there with a different idea, came back and reported to me — and you can check with any of them — that they made every effort to view this from the standpoint of eligibility to vote right on up to the counting. And they were totally enthused and convinced that this election was fair, that the people were enthusiastically in support of it, and that they found no evidence of anything, even judging to the point of the suspected thing of the military maybe influencing people. They saw only the military in protection of the right of the people to vote. They reported that they were very courteous about answering questions or directing people to where they needed to go and so forth.

They found not a thing wrong or any hint of any dishonesty or fraud in the election.

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